

Selecting a school

Choosing a school without considering whether it fits your needs is like buying the first car you see when you walk on the car lot. You have to do some comparison shopping to decide which school is right for you.

To learn more, click on

**select a
school**

at GoHigherKY.org



The variety of college options means almost any student can find the right school. Kentucky has more than 80 colleges and trade schools, many of them with branch campuses. Tuition and required fees for full-time attendance range from about \$2,900 at community and technical colleges to \$35,000 at private colleges each school year. Other costs depend on whether you live on campus or have a long commute to the campus.

Schools must make costs available in writing if you ask. But you have to check the quality of the school and its educational programs. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Reputable schools will gladly explain their programs and policies. You'll invest a great deal of time and money in your education, so it's well worth the effort to get the information you need to make wise decisions.

The School Evaluation chart on page 23 may help you select a school. Some of the answers to the questions in the evaluation are provided in Part III, which has information about most of Kentucky's colleges and trade schools. If you don't find the answers to your questions, contact the school.

Points to consider

As an adult, you may want to find out if the schools you're considering can provide you with information about:

- Child care.
- Evening and weekend classes.
- Tutoring.
- Transportation.
- Payment options.
- Percentage of adult students.
- Academic majors available.
- Accommodations for a disability.
- Housing on or off campus.
- Distance learning.
- Credit for courses completed at another school.
- Transfer of courses to another school where you plan to enroll in the future.
- Graduation and job placement rates.
- Credit by exam.
- Credit for Armed Forces courses.
- Credit for life and/or work experiences.
- Credit for courses sponsored by business, industry and government.
- Availability of support services and counseling.
- Tuition-free classes for senior citizens.
- Time required to complete the program of study.

Steps to help you select a school

- ◆ Visit the school's website. Website addresses are provided on the school pages beginning on page 64.
- ◆ Request and read the school's catalog.
- ◆ Visit the campus.
- ◆ Talk with former students.
- ◆ If the distance to classes is a problem, does the school offer correspondence or online courses?

Types of schools

You have different options to consider when it comes to picking a school, including on-campus and off-campus programs.

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Public universities

Generally, these provide the greatest variety of programs. All offer undergraduate and graduate degrees, and some offer professional degrees in medicine, dentistry, law and other fields. Some also offer associate's degrees.

If you want a great education for less money and don't mind having some large classes, this might be just the place for you.

Private colleges and universities

If you like smaller classes and greater access to faculty, you might want to consider one of Kentucky's private universities and colleges.

These schools all offer bachelor's degrees, while some also offer associate's and advanced degrees. Some private schools have joint programs with public universities in specialized fields.

Private schools generally cost more than public universities, but financial aid is available to help with the costs.

Public two-year colleges

You may want to continue your education at one of the state's community and technical colleges. You can follow several paths there. One leads to an associate's degree that prepares you for finishing a bachelor's degree. Other paths prepare you for entering the workforce. These can take from six months to two years to complete. If you plan carefully, courses you take at community and technical colleges can transfer to a four-year college for credit for a bachelor's degree. See the section about transfers on page 24 and check with the school's admissions office for more information.

A big advantage of going this route is that you can usually find a two-year school near you, meaning you can save money on gas.

Career and trade schools

If you're looking for a fast track to a career, one of these might be your best choice. Career and trade schools, more properly called proprietary schools, are privately owned and licensed. They offer programs in



business, trade, technical, industrial and related areas. Some schools offer only one area of study; others offer programs in several areas.

One thing you should be aware of is that it is sometimes more difficult to transfer credits from one of these schools to another school.

Distance learning

Distance learning includes courses and degrees offered through television, correspondence, CDs, interactive satellite and the Internet. You can take classes no matter where you live, and you may never have to set foot on campus to get your degree.

Online courses are offered through the Kentucky Virtual Campus. Another possibility is the Electronic Campus of the Southern Regional Education Board. KET offers telecourses for college credit. More information about online options is on page 24.

Many schools also offer classes at locations other than their main campus, meaning you may find some offered near where you live. Check with the college admissions office for more information.

To learn more, click on

**adult
education &
e-learning**

at GoHigherKY.org

School evaluation

			Instructions: If you're considering more than three schools, photocopy this page before proceeding. Select the schools for evaluation and write their names on the slanted lines. Answer the questions for each school. (If the answer is "yes," make a "✓" in the column. If the answer is "no," make an "X" in the column.) What are your findings?
			Does the school offer the educational program you want?
			If you're admitted to the school, are you also admitted into the educational program you want?
			Is the school accredited by an agency accepted by the U.S. Department of Education (e.g., Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Council on Occupational Education, Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology, National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences, American Association of Bible Colleges)?
			Is the school licensed or approved by the appropriate state government agency (e.g., Council on Postsecondary Education, State Board for Proprietary Education, State Board of Hairdressers and Cosmetologists, State Board of Barbering, Kentucky Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors)?
			Is the school approved for federal and state financial aid programs?
			Does the school have the resources to provide you the education you need to be successful in the work force? Look for up-to-date training devices, developmental course work and/or tutorial assistance, general education courses (e.g., English and math), educational qualifications of the faculty, and library holdings and resources related to your field of study.
			Will completion of the educational program qualify you for a job? An exam and/or apprenticeship may also be required. If a licensing examination is required for employment in your career field (e.g., nursing, cosmetology, or law), do a high percentage of the school's graduates pass the exam?
			Does the school have a job placement program? Is it free? Are a high percentage of graduates placed in jobs? Recent graduates and potential employers can help you answer these questions. A good school will give you a list of contacts.
			Does the typical starting salary for a new graduate of the school's educational program compare favorably with that of graduates from the same educational program at other schools? Does it meet with your expectation? If the school provides such data, ask to see detailed statistics substantiating the school's claim.
			Does the enrollment contract (if required) clearly indicate the complete cost of your course of study? Are all necessities (books, room and board, transportation, tools, uniforms, etc.) included in the cost? Schools must make printed cost-of-education information readily available to prospective students upon request.
			Does the enrollment contract contain language to protect you if the school closes or discontinues your program? Call the Better Business Bureau in the area to find out if the school has had problems.
			Does the school have a printed refund policy? Good schools have a reasonable refund arrangement for students who withdraw from school.
			Does the school have a low withdrawal rate? A high rate may be a warning sign.
			Will credits earned at one school be acceptable for transfer to another? If you plan to enter one postsecondary institution but transfer to another institution later, will your credits transfer?
			Does the school have a low student loan default rate? Call the U.S. Department of Education at 800.433.3243 to check a school's default rate. A high default rate may be a warning sign.

Transferring between colleges

If you plan to start college at one public school and transfer to another, use the Kentucky transfer tools to help you transfer your course work more easily.

If you're just starting college or you're returning to college and haven't decided on a major, check out the **General Education Transfer Policy** at GoHigherKY.org/planning/transfer. With proper planning, you can transfer general education credits to any public university in Kentucky — without losing credits.

If you've picked your area of study, a **transfer framework** may be right for you. These frameworks guarantee that at least 60 hours of course work will transfer to any public university in Kentucky that offers your chosen major.

Some schools have special transfer arrangements that let students who complete an associate degree transfer credits to a bachelor's degree program at a public university in Kentucky. Check with a college advisor to find out what works for you.

To plan your college course work and make sure you're taking the right courses, check out the **Course Applicability Systems (CAS)** at GoHigherKY.org/planning/transfer.

If you're transferring between public and private schools, talk with people at both schools to find out what will transfer and what won't. This is especially true if you're thinking about transferring from a for-profit trade school.

You should also consult college catalogs and your advisor or counselor to learn more about what's required for your major. You can also find information about transferring at GoHigherKY.org under "plan for college."

To learn more, click on

**transfer
planning**

at GoHigherKY.org



To learn more, click on

**plan for
college**

at GoHigherKY.org

Online learning

You can earn certificates and degrees online through the **Kentucky Virtual Campus (KYVC)**, the state's official virtual campus. The courses and programs are offered by schools in Kentucky and other states and are accessed by logging on to www.kyvu.org. If you register through KYVC, you'll be billed and will make payments to the school that offers those courses. You will receive your certificate or degree from the school that offers the program. KYVC offers online registration; technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; and a call center with evening and Sunday hours.

The Kentucky Virtual Library (KYVL), an online library, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and offers full-text online periodicals and electronic databases. If you have a library card from a Kentucky library, you can access KYVL's databases. For more information, visit www.kyvl.org.

If the program you're looking for isn't available from KYVC, it may be offered through the **Southern Regional Electronic Campus**. The Electronic Campus is a service of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), of which Kentucky is a member.

For more information about the Electronic Campus and a list of programs, visit www.electroniccampus.org. For more information about the Southern Regional Education Board, visit www.sreb.org.

If you're taking online courses, check with the school about financial aid.

To learn more, click on

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**For more information about KYVC
and an up-to-date list of programs,
contact the Call Center
toll-free at 877.740.4357**